



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

## EXPOSITORY PREACHING WITH ESPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE EPISTLE OF JAMES.

By the REV. R. DEWITT MALLARY,  
Lenox, Mass.

ALL true preaching is expository ; and any other kind, whatever it may be, is not preaching. An ethical essay, a pious exhortation, a holy entertainment of anecdotes, with or without a peg on which to hang the moral ; a lecture about biblical criticism, a religious on-looker's view of passing events, may, by an elastic canon of exclusion, be tolerated in the pulpit, but we should separate in our thought such performances from the idea of preaching. That alone is a true sermon which is a mouth-piece of the oracles of God. He alone is a true preacher who heeds the injunction, Preach the Word, and so, in a sense, it is true that all preaching is expository ; an exposition, or setting forth, of the Scriptures, a showing forth of the meaning of the Word of God and its bearings on human life, knowledge, belief and conduct. The most humble untutored attempt to set forth the Scriptures is a better sermon than the finished, ethical lecture not interwoven with the text of the Sacred Word, as the light is brighter which comes through glass with a flaw in it than it is when it comes through the most richly stained window. Preaching, whatever it may have become, is only true to its original norm and pattern when it opens the Scriptures. This was what Christ did on that road going down to Emmaus, and the hearts of his two auditors "burned within them" as he expounded the Word. This was what Paul did in the synagogues, "opening and alleging." Preaching in the apostolic age had this sole and exclusive characteristic.

Generally, then, it may be affirmed that preaching, if it is to sound a true note, must be expository ; specifically, however, we have in use a queer and rather humiliating phrase, "expository

preaching." As if one should speak of dialectical reasonings, mechanical mechanism, and so on, and yet we assign to expository preaching a distinct, and, I greatly fear, an inferior place. We dominate the study where we prepare for the Sabbath, with popular tests, with best methods to fill the pews, with pious clap-trap, forgetting that a greater than Jonah preached to less than Jonah, and a greater than Solomon found less to hear his superior wisdom. We laugh at the Salvation Army which drum-beats men into the kingdom and tickles new converts with a military title, but, pray, what right have we, who resort to the clap-trap of sensational advertisements or announcements, to laugh at them. The tailless monkeys of Borneo laughed at the monkeys of the Sumatra because they had no tails, and could not see that they themselves were without them. And so a glance at the Saturday's daily paper is fatal to all our boasts of less dramatic tactics than those of the red-jersey and poke-bonnet missionaries. Modern preachers, with their silly topics, live in too crystalline a house to throw stones at the fellow who goes by with distended cheeks tooting for Jesus on a big bass horn, for he might say, with apparent justice, My method of shooting brings down the birds, my method of fishing encloses the catch! And so the poor modern preacher goes on from topic to topic, finding the topic in the street, in the office, in the field, and then putting before his composition a text of Scripture, to give it a sort of quasi-religious or expository cast. It has, therefore, come about that a very great deal of modern preaching, so called, is merely the accumulated data of ethics or experience which the preacher has either felt or observed. Instead of drinking from the fresh, sparkling, and clear springs which rise perennially in the Word of God, he is content with the muddled pool of his own reflections and conclusions. He too often gets his topic from "the times;" and brings to his pulpit lessons of the last calamity, the newest show in town, the latest "strike." Sometimes, if he be an Episcopal minister, he is content to sit down with a pre-arranged church year, and slavishly follow it. Often he feels called upon to commence all these so-called sermons with a text, but whereas a text means something woven into the texture of

the discourse, this modern topical preacher wants to get it out of the way as soon as possible. His great egotistic theory of sermon construction is, What do I think about this subject? Who cares what he thinks? This is not a priest-ridden age. What does God say on this or that point of life and conduct? "To the law and to the testimony!" Only so shall he feed the flock. Only so shall he edify, build up the church. Only so can his ministry be like a cloud of blessing unlocking its refreshing moisture upon the souls which have been diligently and faithfully sown with divine truth. He may be ever so sincere, indefatigable, and hopeful, but the condition of effective and true preaching is that the Word is preached, without which his field is a desert on which not even the appearance of verdure is present.

Let us dismiss, then, from our thought merely topical preaching, so called. Whatever else it is and however valuable it may be—and I concede its value used wisely—it is not preaching. We come, then, to two specific kinds of expository preaching—the "textual" and the so-called "expository;" and I conceive that the only real difference between the two is, stated briefly, this:

Both are expository, but the "expository" specifically so named deals with a larger amount of Scripture at a time, a paragraph, a section, a chapter, perhaps, and deals with the Scripture consecutively. The textual method may become topical or expository, according as the preacher suits the bit of Scripture to something in his own mind, or suits himself to the exact thought in the author's mind. All the printed sermons of Bushnell are textual, and, by a happy unifying of the thought and a strict observance of the law of the "unities," become, to a certain extent, topical, but they are matchless and true expositions as well. Yet "expository" sermons, as we have them in our mind, are such as those in the recent book of Dr. Dale, on the Epistle of James; F. W. Robertson's, on "Corinthians and Genesis;" Arnot's "The Church in the House, the same being lectures on the Book of the Acts," etc. It may be said, in passing, that the method of the modern evangelists, however we

may judge their school of thinking, is expository; and it may be inferred that perhaps the reason of Mr. Moody's success is to be found, not in his musical satellite, nor in his homely, pungent, and practical wisdom, nor in his advertised coming and the machinery of preparation, nor in his career now so noted, but in the fact that he is permeated through and through with biblical truth. Exposition is his only purpose, his only claim, his strong point; and though it may grate on our nerves to see pictures of his Bible all torn and thumb-ed and written upon—one such appeared in a weekly print not long ago—yet we cannot get around the fact that he claims to be a biblical preacher. Expository preaching, then, is the unfolding of the sacred oracles in consecutive order. It is an attempt to explain and enforce scriptural truth, to analyze the thought of the sacred writers, and set that forth in logical order, with practical lessons growing out of the same. It is a consideration of the text with an exegete's purpose, unbiased by a theologian's habit of thought, uninfluenced by a critic's merciless temper. It is the interpretation of an author by natural methods, the study of books of the Bible as to their dominant idea and main purpose, the orderly development of this thought or purpose, the explanation of an author's mind by that author's mind, Moses by Moses, Jesus by Jesus, Paul by Paul, the communication of the largest amount of biblical truth, and, above and between, and accompanying it all, the humble, earnest purpose to have the Spirit of God press home to our hearts the lessons which are constantly arising vividly before the thought. There is to be no restriction as to the length of the passage, but only an orderly procedure from paragraph to paragraph through whatever book may be up for study.

This, then, is expository preaching, and I would not be understood as saying that it is the only kind of preaching, but that it can be made very interesting, should have its place in the work of the pulpit now and then at certain seasons of the year, or possibly once in a while for a series of evening sermons, and is adapted to procure the best results.

What, then, are some of the advantages of this so-called expository preaching?

1. It imparts biblical truth, and hence more nearly conforms to the theory and aim of preaching.

2. The church which has the largest amount of biblical teaching will be blessed. The Berean type of church life is the norm for all the ages. It is written that the church in Berea received the word . . . and examined the Scriptures daily, and therefore it is said that they were "more noble" than other disciples of the apostle Paul. If we believe anything we must cling firmly to this: God *will bless* his Word. He does not promise to bless our lecture on the new arbitration treaty, or on Cuba; our essay upon Nansen's work of discovery, or our talk on the "unearned increment;" but he does set his seal to the promise that his "word shall not return to him void." Here is the secret of conversions, of results.

3. Expository preaching can be made popular. Look at Taylor, McLeod, Dale, Robertson—all popular preachers. The centuries are full of them. Even Henry Ward Beecher, who may not be thought of in this connection, was during his long ministry at certain times much given to this form of teaching. I can remember an interesting series of his expository sermons on the Book of Joshua before audiences which crowded the vast auditorium to the doors. Indifference to the expository method on the part of the ministry proceeds from ignorance of its interest to and power over the people. The modern evangelists attest its popularity.

4. The expository method presents Scripture in its entirety. The textual method takes here one and there another verse of the Bible, and like bees sucking honey out of the same kind of flowers, the textual preacher gets in the way of lighting upon the same thoughts in different verses. If he has preached upon the "Love of God" from "God is love," he will, like as not, try it again from "He beareth the lambs in his bosom," and so on, *ad infinitum*, ever the same themes recurring. As the Episcopal order of service provides for the reading of the whole Bible through the year, the expository method brings before the congregation connected and perfected knowledge of the whole Bible.

5. This method provides delicately a way for treating doctrine and for rebuking modern evils. The need of the people is a "reason for the hope that is within them," or doctrinal enrichment, and greater conformity to the pattern set before us on the mount where Christ preached his matchless sermon. It is sometimes hard for the textual preacher to screw his courage up to the point of either a doctrinal sermon or a philippic against modern vices. To preach a doctrinal sermon might put his hearers to sleep, he fears; to preach a sermon of denunciation of present-day iniquity might wake them so thoroughly that, like the people of Gadara, his people would "beseech him to depart out of their borders." Expository preaching presents a way of rebuking; it comes up naturally in the passage, just as the doctrine did. It must be treated. The minister has not picked out his theme because of personal reasons, but because it is forced upon him by the Scripture he is expounding.

6. The expository method lends power to the sermon. The expository preacher speaks with authority and not as the ethical lecturer, or retailer of anecdotes. A "thus saith the Lord" permeates all his preaching. The people see that he is clothed with authority, and they listen gladly because of the note of certainty, conviction, power, authority, they detect in his preaching. Herein is the peril of essays on economic subjects, lectures on passing events, etc.—they lack authority. Herein is the differentiation of pulpit and press, in that the former speaks, or at least can speak, with authority. This is the advantage of the pulpit. The picture business in the pulpit entertains, the secular lecture attracts and instructs, but the pulpit is neither for the showman nor for the lecturer, but for the messenger of God, who comes with a message of authority out of God's Word.

7. The expository method is good for the preacher. It has a reactionary benefit. To sit right down with the implements of a student's industry, ancient texts and a dictionary and a concordance, to work at the text with critical helps, and prepare a scholar's exposition of the Word, leavened through and through by prayer for guidance—the art of the critic never

overshadowing the heart of the preacher—this is the way to crowd our minds with Scriptures. The expository preacher's workshop is full of chips—textual memoranda—not dry and juiceless either, which fly off from every attempt of his to perfect his knowledge of the Scripture; or, to change the figure, it is astonishing how deep the well of the Scripture is—depths beneath depths—if we let our bucket down far enough—fresh, sparkling, refreshing draughts of the Water of Life, if we do more than drink from the surface.

Expository sermons are after all the sermons which live in literature. Robertson's sermons on Corinthians are a contribution to all time, and this whole subject is forced upon us afresh by the appearance of Dr. Dale's *Expository Lectures on the Epistle of James*. The book contains ten lectures, with the subjects as follows: (1) James, the Brother of our Lord. (2) The Gospel of Suffering. (3) Temptations and Trials. (4) Hearing and Doing. (5) Respect of Persons. (6) Faith and Works. (7) The Perils of Speech. (8) The Discipline of the Tongue. (9) The Wisdom from Above. (10) Christian Worldliness. A review of this book would be a review of the epistle itself. The book is a demonstration of the truth which Robinson uttered: "More light shall break forth from God's Word." It is food for the Bible student.

As a conclusion I present a list of subjects for discourses gained by a careful study of this book and of the text itself, which may indicate something of the value of the expository method.

1. James, the brother of the Lord; or, lessons concerning conversion, for this brother once did not believe in Jesus.
2. Rejoice in temptation, etc.; or, virtue the measure of one's resistance of temptation. Subject, Temptation, its origin, its power to help, etc. Teaching of Lord's Prayer, how harmonized with this.
3. Let patience have its perfect work; or, the perfecting power of a quiet, patient, waiting life. Subject, Patience.
4. Let the rich man rejoice, etc.; message of the gospel to the men of wealth of today. Scripture teachings concerning wealth.
5. Let the poor man rejoice in his high estate; or, message of the gospel to the poor, or the submerged not "tenth" but half.



6. Every good gift, etc.; or, the recognition of God as the bountiful giver.

7. Not hearers, but doers of the Word; or, the duty of doing. Dr. Dale dwells upon that definition of James—to *visit* the fatherless, or personal acquaintance with suffering, not acquaintance with them by the proxy of someone whom we pay to go to visit them.

8. Have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ with respect of persons; or, Christianity the obliteration of class distinctions.

9. He who offends in one point, etc.; or, the heinousness of sin.

10. Faith without works; or, the nature of true faith as distinguished from mere creed subscription. Works the test.

11. My brethren, be not many teachers; or, the awful responsibility of the teaching office. Dr. Dale's chapter on The Perils of Speech would almost close the lips of the preacher, certainly check crude, extravagant, or doubtful utterance.

12. The perfect man he who gains the mastery over his tongue; or, the profane, impure, and angry words rebuked. A sermon on conversation, profanity, jests, stories, etc.

13. First pure, then peaceable; or, reform work and its spirit.

14. Friendship with the world; or, the deadly serpent's spell of worldliness on so-called Christian character.

15. Tomorrow we will go here and there; or, the dangers of absorption in business life, or the Midas touch of the present day.

16. Elijah prayed earnestly, and the effectual fervent prayer of the righteous man; or, the spirit and power of prayer.

17. He that converteth a sinner, etc.; or, zeal in extending the kingdom by soul winning.

Professor Phelps in his lectures on preaching says: "I am confident that my biblical course saved my pulpit." I firmly believe that the expository method will save all pulpits, because him that honoreth God and his words, will God honor.